

read his work, be sure you carry his candle along with you, and so shall you be sure to read it the better. I have done.

Be sure you look upon every work of God as coming out of the hand of your Father, that you may say, Oh, this is my Father's work, and this is my Father's work. London is destroyed, but this is my Father's work. You have heard of that honest, good man of Chelmsford, when it thundered and lightened, insomuch as all the town were afraid that doomsday was come; how he got upon a stall in the street, and said, This is my Father's voice. And so when you look upon any work of the Lord, look upon it as your Father's work, and then you will take a sweetness and contentment in the meditation thereof.

And thus I have given you some taste. But how this work of meditation is to be carried on with sweetness I reserve for the next exercise; only for the present you have heard what a profitable thing it is to meditate on the things of God. What now remains but to get up and be thinking and meditating on God and the things of God.

SERMON VIII.

THE WORK AND WAY OF MEDITATION.

"My meditation of him shall be sweet." PSALM civ. 34.

HAVING shewed how sweet and profitable the work of meditation is, to meditate on God and the things of God; we came the last day to this question or objection:

But if the work of meditation be so sweet and profitable, what shall we do that this work of meditation may be carried on with sweetness and profit?

I am a stranger to this work of meditation: I have often read the Scriptures and not meditated on them; I have often heard the word and not meditated thereon; I have sometimes begun to meditate, but finding it a hard work I have left it off again. And sometimes I have thought that this work is incumbent only upon students and preachers. But if it be our duty to meditate on God, and the things of God, what

shall we do that the work of holy meditation may be carried on with profit and with sweetness?

For answer hereunto, four or five things I shall speak unto.

First, I shall labour to shew you, that it is our duty to meditate on God and the things of God.

Secondly, That this work of meditation is every man's work, and every day's work, and such a work as is consistent with every business and condition.

Thirdly, I shall lay down some means for the right performance of this work.

Fourthly, Give you some rules and directions, how this work of meditation should be carried on with sweetness and profit, in a right manner.

And then draw forth some arguments or motives to press you all hereunto.

First, It is our work and duty to meditate on God and the things of God. Will you instance according to our explication at the first.

Will you instance in the nature, titles and attributes of God? Why, it is our work and duty so to meditate on God; for wicked men are blamed that God is not in all their thoughts. If they be blamed for this, that God is not in all their thoughts, then surely God is to be in all our thoughts.

Good and holy men are commended and rewarded for this. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought on his name." They are commended, and they are rewarded. In the day when God makes up his jewels, they shall be found among them. Mal. iii.

And who doth not know that it is our duty to praise the Lord. Not only to be thankful to God upon the account of benefits received, but to praise the Lord upon the account of his own excellencies. And how should the heart be tuned and framed unto this praising of God, but by meditation on the name and nature and titles of God? "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised," Psalm xlviii. 1. How doth he tune his heart to this praise? "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God."

The more that the heart of any man is laid in with meditation, the more pregnant will his words be in the praises of

God. So that thus then, it is our duty for to meditate upon this account.

But will you instance in Christ the Son of God? As it is our work and duty to meditate on the nature, titles, and attributes of God; so to spend and to lay out our thoughts upon Christ the Son of God. You may observe therefore, that this word "Behold," is oftener prefixed and set before the mystery of Christ, than before any other depth or mystery in Scripture. And why so? But to show that this depth and this mystery is that especially that calls forth our consideration and our meditation. There are four things concerning Christ which do call for our meditation.

The personal excellency of Christ. The offices of Christ. The life, and the death of Christ.

As for the personal excellencies of Christ, you read what the apostle saith, Heb. vii. 4, "Now consider how great this man was," Melchizedek, the type of Christ; and if the type were so great, Christ is greater. And if we are to consider the greatness of the type, much more to consider and meditate on the greatness and personal excellencies of Christ typified.

And as for the offices of Christ, you read what the apostle saith in chap. iii. 1, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

And as for the life of Christ, you know what the apostle saith, in chap. xii. 2, "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith."

And for the sufferings of Christ, you read what follows: "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame; for consider him (verse 3) that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself," &c. So that thus then, we are to meditate on God upon this account; laying out and spending our thoughts and meditations upon Christ the Son of God.

But, will you instance in the word of God? Why, as we are to meditate on Christ, the Son of God, so we are to meditate on the word of God. Psalm cxix. 15, "I will meditate on thy precepts." Verse 23, "Thy servant did meditate on thy statutes." Verse 48, "And I will meditate on thy statutes." At the 93rd verse, "Oh how I love thy law, it is my medita-

tion all the day." The word of God we are to meditate on; to meditate on God, and the things of God upon this account, Now here are four things that will lead you out to meditation :

The exactness of the commandment.

The faithfulness of the promise.

The terror of the threatening.

And the weightiness of the examples; all which meet in the Scriptures, and in the word of God. And accordingly we are to meditate on the word of God, upon this account.

Will you instance in the works of God? Why, as we are to meditate on the word, so we are also to meditate on the works of God. The work of creation, the work of providence, and the work of redemption. The works of God are sought out of all those that have pleasure in them. "I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works, I muse on the work of thy hands," Psalm cxliii. Thus David did, and thus should we also do; so that thus then you see, that it is our work and our duty to meditate on God and the things of God, in reference to his nature, name and attributes; in reference to his Son; in reference to his word; and in reference to the works of God. And that is the first general.

Secondly, Now this work of meditation is every man's work, it is every day's work, and it is that work that is consistent with every business and condition.

I say it is every man's work; it is the work of the wicked, and it is the work of the godly.

It is the work of the wicked, for it is their first step unto conversion. The prodigal bethought himself, and returned unto his Father's house. The prophet Haggai calling upon the Jews to repent saith, "Consider your ways." "I considered my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies," saith David. Consider your ways; or, as in the Hebrew, set your heart upon your ways. And when doth a man set his heart upon his ways, but when he doth seriously ponder and meditate on his ways? This work of meditation therefore, I say, it is the work of the wicked, it is their first step unto conversion.

And it is the work of the godly; meditation work is a godly man's work. For either he is weak or strong:

If he be weak, he hath need of it that he may be strengthened.

If he be strong, he hath need of it that he may be quickened. There is no man but hath need of meditation.

If a man be a beginner, he ought to meditate that he may proceed.

If he be a proficient, he ought to meditate that he may be perfect.

If he be perfect with gospel perfection, he ought to meditate that he may hold on his perfection. Psalm i. it is made the general description of a good man, "He delighteth in the law of the Lord; and in that law doth he meditate."

And as it is every man's work, so it is every day's work. There are some special times, as you will hear, which are more fit for meditation. But this work of meditation is every day's work. "When I awake (saith the psalmist) I am ever with thee." How? By prayer and meditation. "I have set the Lord always before me." How, but by meditation and prayer? What time is there that is not fit for this work of meditation?

Is the sabbath day unfit for it? No; there is a prayer for the sabbath, Psalm xcii., to meditate on the works of God.

Is the week day unfit for this work of meditation? No. The sabbath day is our market day; and then after we have bought our market on the sabbath, we should roast it by meditation on the week. We do not go to the market on the market day, to buy meat into the house only for the market day, but for all the time until the market day comes about again. Indeed Solomon saith of the sluggard, that he is so sluggish and slothful, that "he doth not roast what he hath taken in hunting." The sabbath day is the hunting day for souls wherein the venison is taken: on the week day we are to roast it, and to live upon it by meditation, and otherwise. And what is the reason that many do not live upon their venison, that they have taken on the Lord's day? but because they do not roast it by meditation on the week day, and so are in the number of Solomon's sluggards: the sluggard roasteth not the venison that he hath taken in hunting. I am sure that David in the cxixth Psalm saith, that his meditation was at work all the day long: "It is my meditation all the day;" not a piece of it, it is every day's work, it is

all the day's work. Yea in Psalm i. he takes in the night too. "He delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night." So that that is the second thing, meditation work is every day's work. As it is every man's work, so it is every day's work. And,

As it is every day's work, so it is that work that is consistent with every business and with every condition: a garment that will fit the back of every condition. What dunghill condition, but this flower of meditation may grow thereupon? In Judges v. 11, it is said there, "They that are delivered from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water; there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord." There, where? Why in "the places of drawing water;" when they are in the field drawing water: and if that be a fit place to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, certainly then it is a place fit for meditation. And if that the place of drawing water, then the very place of scraping trenchers, and sweeping the kennel, may be a place fit for meditation. If that the place of drawing water, be a place fit for rehearsing the acts of the Lord; what place, what condition, what business, but meditation may accompany it?

Possibly a man may be sick, and he may be kept from books, or he may be kept from hearing; but yet he may meditate on God and the things of God.

Possibly he may be thrown into prison, and he may be kept from books and Bible, yet he cannot be kept from meditation. It is said of Mr. Glover, that great martyr in queen Mary's time, that lying in prison at Coventry, it was told him he should be removed to a close prison at Lichfield, and all books taken away from him. At that he was much troubled; but, saith he, I sat down and considered, and meditated with myself, Is God the God of Coventry, and not of Lichfield? is not God the God of Lichfield as well as of Coventry? And when I had thought on this thing, and meditated thus, my heart was quiet within me. Surely there is no condition so sour, but sweet meditation may grow thereon. Now if this work of meditation be a work that is consistent with every business and every condition, every day's work and every man's work; why should we not be found in the practice of it?

Thirdly, But you will say, What help or what means to

this work of meditation? What shall I do, how and by what means should this work of meditation be performed?

If you could meditate on God rightly and duly, (to speak first by way of means, and then for the rules of direction afterwards;) be very sensible of your want, and of your neglect herein. A man is never more fit for a duty, than when he is very sensible of his neglect therein; sensibleness of neglect of former duty, fits one for future duty. If a man have very great possessions, and he lose them, he is very sensible of the loss thereof. Why now look into Job xvii., and you shall find there are thought-possession: saith he, "My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart." In the Hebrew, even the "possessions of my heart." As if he should say thus: Time was that I had very great thought-possession, I thought on God, I enjoyed God, I possessed God; but now I have lost these my possessions of God, and the thoughts of my heart, the possessions of my heart are broken off. Thus sensible, Job was of the loss of his thought-possession. And the more rich our thought-possession are, the greater is our loss. And the more sensible we are of the loss of our thought-possession, and of our meditations, the more fit we shall be for this work of meditation. First therefore be very sensible of your want and neglect of this work of meditation thus long.

If you would meditate indeed on God and the things of God, labour more and more for a serious spirit; a frothy, light and giggling disposition, is never fit for meditation: labour therefore to be serious. And there are three or four things that will poise and make your hearts serious.

The sight of the glorious majesty of God.

The sense of your eternal condition; eternity, eternity.

Humiliation for sin.

And converse with those that are serious. Be serious, and you will be more fit for meditation.

If you would indeed meditate on God and the things of God, labour more and more for a fixed spirit: fixation of spirit is a great friend to meditation. An unsettled, an unfixed soul, cannot meditate: fix therefore first. And there are many things that may fix your spirits.

The great and weighty judgments of God that are upon us, may help to fix us, and hang lead upon our heels.

In case you are to come to meditation, or any other work, come free, and do not leave any business standing at the door; for a hundred to one but your hearts will step out unto it, at the time of your work, whether meditation, or prayer, or any thing else. Therefore come free unto every duty, if you would be fixed.

And labour for intensesness of affection. In meditation, prayer, or any other work, be intense. We used to say, When the candle burns, the mouse doth not nibble; but when the candle is out, then the mouse nibbles. When our hearts are warm and lively in prayer and meditation, we are free from distractions; the mouse nibbles not.

And in case you meet with any distraction in meditation, or other duty, do not stand to correct your heart in the time of the duty, but go on with your work. If a woman carries a child abroad among friends, and the child cries and makes a disturbance, the mother does not then correct the child there; but calls the child to an account when she comes at home: for, saith she, else would my correction be a further disturbance to the company. So here, when you meet with distractions in duty, if you call your hearts to an account then, it will be a further disturbance; but on with your present duty, correct afterward; and thus shall your hearts be the more fixed, and fixation of heart is a great help to meditation.

If you would indeed meditate on God and the things of God, be sure that you lay out such objects as may give entertainment to your thoughts. For if there be no corn in the quern, what grinding will there be? Have therefore objects laid out to exercise your thoughts withal, upon all occasions; and so when you have any spare time, your objects lying by, you will be presently upon the work of meditation: only let those objects be such as are drawing, alluring, thought-begetting objects, and thought-entertaining objects: but then

If you would meditate on God and the things of God, strengthen your love and delight; for meditation grows upon the stalk of love and delight: and the more a man doth love God and the things of God, the more he meditates thereon: Psalm cxix., "Oh how I love thy law?" What then? "It is my

meditation all the day :” this was much ; his meditation all the day. What is the reason ? Why, his love was beyond expression ; “ Oh how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day.” Love loves to be thinking on the person loved. It carries the picture of the person or thing loved up and down in its bosom ; the more you love, the more you meditate ; and the more you delight, the more you meditate. Can a woman forget her child ? No. Why ? Because she loves it. Can a worldly man forget the world, his money and his house or land, can he forget this ? No, why ? Because he loves them. What is the reason we meditate no more, but because we love God no more ? Do but strengthen your love to God and the things of God, and your delight in God and the things of God, and you will meditate more. Strengthen therefore your love to, and your delight in the Lord : and then

If you would meditate on God and the things of God, then labour to get a deep impression of the things of God upon your heart and soul. It is a deep impression that calls for meditation. A man reads the word of God, and it may be he understands it, but he does not meditate. Why ? Because the word made no impression upon his heart as he went along. But if he read it, and understand it, and hath an impression made upon his soul as he reads it, then he thinks on it afterwards : as in hearing the word of God, a man hears the word of God in public or in private, and he meditates not thereupon. Why ? why, because it has no impression upon him. Possibly a man may think of the free grace of God, yet if it make no impression upon his soul, he does not go away and meditate on it. If a man think on the wrath of God, and it make an impression upon him, he goes away, and is still in the thoughts thereof. What is the reason that many poor souls, troubled in conscience are always thinking of hell, and judgment, and wrath, but because the wrath of God hath made a deep impression upon their souls ; and the more deep the impression is upon your soul, the more full will your meditation be. You see how it was in the former times, when they went in procession at the end of the parish, they would take up a boy and whip him. Why ? that he might remember the bounds of the parish : for, passion is the best door-keeper of memory. And as passion is

the door-keeper of memory, so impression is the door-keeper of meditation.

If you would meditate on God and the things of God, take heed that your hearts and your hands, be not too full of the world, and the employments thereof. The more full your hand is of worldly employments, the more you will think thereon; and the more you think thereon, the less you will think of God and the things of God. And what is the reason that many meditate and think so little of God and the things of God, but because their hearts are so full of the world, "Where their treasure is, there will their hearts be."

Oh, saith one, I would think on God, and I would meditate on God with all my heart, but meditation work is a work of time, it will cost time, and I have no time; my hands are so full of business, and so full of employment, I have no time for this work. Meditation is not a transient thought, but it is a work of time, and will ask time, and I have no time. Mark therefore what David saith in Psalm cxix., "Lord incline my heart unto thy testimonies," how so? "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." The way to have one's heart inclined to the testimonies of God, is to turn away one's eyes from these outward vanities. Would you therefore meditate on God and the things of God, then take heed that your hearts, and your hands, be not too full of the world and the employments thereof.

If you would meditate on God, and the things of God, go then to God for this skill of meditation. Friends, there is an art, and a divine skill of meditation, which none can teach but God alone. Would you have it, go then to God, and beg of God these things.

Beg of God that he would change your nature: for if your soil be not changed, nothing but weeds will grow still, not the flowers of meditation, but the weeds of vain thoughts; go first to God to change your nature, to change your soil.

Go to God and beg of him that he would sanctify and sequester your mind unto himself, that your whole mind may be under God's sequestration. Every man is as his mind is. A man's mind is a profuse thing, and it is as full of thoughts, as the sun is full of beams. If God do not take it in, and bring it under his sequestration, it will be full of

evil; go then to God, and desire him to sanctify your devising, your thinking, and your projecting faculty.

Go to God and beg of him that he would lay out drawing objects before you, that may draw out your thoughts, and your meditations. It is God that must present such objects.

Go and beg of God your thoughts also, and beg of God these thought-possession, that God would give you thoughts. And then,

Beg of God a fixed heart: for fixation of heart is a great friend to meditation. And then,

Beg of God the Spirit, for the Spirit is our remembrancer, to bring all things to our remembrance. Thus do, and you shall in some measure be able to carry on this work of meditation in a right way, with comfort and sweetness. These things by way of means: by way of means; be sensible of your former want of meditation; labour to be more serious; get a fixed heart and spirit; lay out objects that may entertain your thoughts upon all occasions; strengthen your love to, and delight in God; labour to get impressions, deep impressions made upon your souls to the things of God, and take heed that your hearts and hands be not too full of the world; and then go to God for this skill of meditation.

Fourthly, But then what are those rules and directions that will help therein? How and in what way and manner should this work of meditation be carried on, with sweetness and success?

In all your retirements, for the work of meditation is a work of retirement, in all your retirements, be sure that you retire in to God himself. Do not retire into your retirements as the monks and those do retire into a monkish devotion. But in all your retirements be sure that you retire into God himself.

Take heed that you be not legal in this work of meditation. Legal work is sour work; meditation work is sweet work. A man is legal in this work of meditation when he doth make it a mere task, when he doth in his meditation think on God out of Christ. "I thought upon God and was troubled;" to think upon God out of Christ is sour work; I thought upon God and was not comforted, but was troubled, saith the Psalmist. So that to make our meditation work a mere task, is a legal work; to think upon God out of Christ is a

legal work; and to pass through God unto Christ also is legal. For, in the times of the old testament they came to Christ through God, but in the time of the new testament we go to God through Christ. An old testament way is a legal way, would you therefore have this work of meditation carried on with sweetness? take heed of a legal spirit in this work of meditation, which will sour all.

Be sure of this, that nothing fall within the compass of your meditation, but what falls within the compass of the Scripture. It may be you may think of God, and you may think what God was doing before the world was made, this you have no Scripture for, therefore it is no work for your meditation. It may be you think you are a reprobate; for say you, I have the marks of a reprobate upon me. But where doth the Scripture give any marks of a reprobate? The Scripture gives marks of a wicked man that possibly may be converted. But now, if you would carry on the work of meditation in such a way as it may be done with sweetness, be sure that it be bounded with the Scripture; and let nothing fall within the compass of your meditation, but what falls within the compass of the Scripture.

In all your settled meditation, begin with reading or hearing. Go on with meditation; end in prayer. For as Mr. Greenham saith well: Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is hurtful; to meditate and to read without prayer upon both, is without blessing.

If you do read and not meditate, then you will want good affections.

If you do meditate and not read or hear, you will want good judgment, and be apt to fall into some ill opinions.

If you do read, or hear, or meditate, and not pray, you will want the blessing of the Lord upon both. Read or hear first; then meditate; and then pray upon both. I speak of settled meditation, and let one be proportioned unto another. There must be a proportion between the one and the other in a settled meditation; and therefore if that you would meditate rightly, I say, in all your meditations, begin with reading, go on with meditation, and end with prayer.

If you would have this work of meditation carried on with profit and sweetness, join with your meditation the examination of your own souls; in case you meditate on God and Christ,

think with yourselves by way of examination, But have I an interest in this? I have been now thinking and meditating on the excellencies of Christ, but have I an interest in him? Come, O my soul, thou hast been meditating on God, and on the excellencies of Christ, but hast thou any share, hast thou any interest therein? Join examination with your meditation, then it will be profitable, then it will be sweet; otherwise it is but contemplation, or but a study; but join examination with your meditation, so it is sweet, and so it is profitable.

Observe what those times and seasons are that are most fit for meditation, and be sure you lay hold thereon. Though meditation work is every day's work, yet there are some times and seasons that are more fit for meditation. Shall I name four or five:

Look when the Lord hath made any deep impression upon your soul by word or work, then is a time for your meditation; for impression calls for meditation.

The morning is a fit time for meditation before the world come in. What more fit for God than the best of time; the morning is the best of time, therefore a fit time for meditation on God.

The sabbath day is a fit time also for meditation, therefore the xciiid Psalm is appointed for the sabbath. A Psalm for the sabbath day, saith the title to the Psalm.

The time of God's special dispensations is a fit time for it; look when there is a special dispensation of God abroad, either of mercy or judgment, then is a fit time for meditation. In the ixth Psalm: "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth, the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands, Higgsion Selah." What is that? It comes from the Hebrew *Hagah*, which signifies to meditate. When the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands, here is work for meditation. Look, I say, when there is a special dispensation of God either in mercy or judgment, that is a fit time for meditation.

Look what time that is that lies next, or near, or close to any great work or service; that is a fit time for meditation. As for example: Suppose we be to receive the Lord's supper; the time that lies next before it is a fit time for meditation. Suppose a man be to be called out for some great service or

employment; the time that goes close before it is a fit time for him to sit down and meditate with himself upon the work; for the more a man doth prepare for a work, the more likely he is in reason to perform it well. Now, meditation is a good preparation. Look therefore what that time is that goes immediately before or close to the work of the Lord, that is a fit time for meditation. Thus now you see what the special times are for the work of meditation. The time of impressions. The morning time. The sabbath day. The time of special dispensations, either of mercy or judgment. And the time that goes immediately, or next, or close before the great work and service of the Lord. And, if you would meditate rightly, observe what the fit times for meditation are, and be sure you lay hold thereon.

I will name but one more. Though there is a great deal of profit and sweetness to be found in this work of meditation, and it is every day's work, yet take heed that you do not so meditate on one of God's excellencies as to neglect another; nor do not so spend your whole time in the work of meditation, that this work of meditation should eat up other duties: God would have us rise from this work of meditation, as from any other duty, with an hungry appetite. Friends, God would have us rise hungry from every duty, and not gluttoned; variety is refreshing; he hath given many duties that we may not pore upon one. In case, therefore, you have been at the work of meditation, either God hath come in upon you with his special influence or not: if he hath, praise the Lord for his assistance, it is a mercy that you have had one good thought of God, but meditation is more than a thought, meditation is thought upon thought; praise God, that is the way to have more. And in case that God hath not come in upon you in the work of meditation, then yet be not discouraged, for God would not have you gluttoned, and God would lead you to some other work; and one duty, one work is not to eat up and devour another. I say with one, Let not your time be the measure or rule of your meditation, but your meditation the rule of your time. Yet take heed that you do not spend so much time in musing and considering and meditating as that this work of meditation should eat up any other duty, but quicken thereunto. And thus you see some means, some helps to this work of meditation; some rules and directions

for the right carrying it on sweetly; what now remains, but that you up and be doing; turn your hand to it. You have heard the duty proved; you have heard the sweetness and profitableness thereof cleared; you have heard what objects we are to lay our thoughts out upon; and you have heard some means as helps unto the work, and some rules and directions for the carrying of it on: oh, then, you that have never spent an hour in meditation all your days, if there be any such here, now bethink yourselves, and now give up your thoughts to God. You that have gone one year after another, and one week after another, and never spent any time in meditating on God or the things of God, oh, now bethink yourselves: and that you may do so, and be provoked hereunto, give me leave to lay down some arguments and motives to press both your souls and mine unto this great work of meditation. The arguments are divers. Thus,

Friends, the more acquaintance you have with this work of meditation, the more time you will get, and the less you will lose. A man that hath the skill on it need never lose an hour. Who knows the worth of time? This little spot of time doth our eternity depend upon; yet, Lord, how many are there that lose their precious hours and time! But what is the reason? They have no hand at this work of meditation: when their business is over they might, otherwise, turn their hand to this work, and lose no time. The more acquaintance you have with this work of meditation, the more time you will get, and the less you will lose.

Hereby, even by this work of meditation, you shall get into the secrets of divine things. There is a secret and a mystery in every trade: a man does not know the trade till he knows the secret and the mystery of it: it is said, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Knowledge brings us to the door of truth, but meditation hath us into the house, and into all the rooms thereof: thereby, I say, you shall get into the inwards and the secrets of the things of God.

Thereby, also, you shall suck out the sweetness of all those divine and precious things that you know. As a man by musing on his sins, sucks out the sweetness thereof; so by meditating on the things of God you suck out the sweetness of the things of God into your own souls.

By this work of meditation you shall have a testimony in

your own souls that you are truly godly. Every man is what he is most in private. A good man's work lies most underground, lies most out of sight. In the time of Moses, the beasts were clean that chewed the cud, and unclean that did not chew the cud. In the time of David it is made the description of a godly man; "He delighteth in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate." Hereby, then, you shall have a testimony in your own hearts that you are truly godly. But you shall not only have a testimony that you are truly godly, but practice it, and thereby you shall be very godly: for the more constant you are in godliness, the more godly you are. By the work of meditation, you will be constant in the work of godliness. The more extensive your godliness is, the more godly you are. Now by meditation you can extend your thoughts beyond your hands. As by sinful musings a man can extend his thoughts beyond his power to practice; so by meditation on God and the things of God, a man may extend his thoughts concerning godliness beyond his power to act. As in sin, a man by his thoughts may be naught where he hath not an outward power to be naught; so by holy meditation, a man may be good where he hath not a power in his hand to practice. The psalmist saith in the xlvth Psalm: "The king's daughter is all glorious within, her garment is of wrought gold," verse 13. Her clothing is of wrought gold, is not that glorious? clothing is outward, but saith he, "She is all glorious within;" it is not the wrought gold without makes her glorious, but she is all glorious within; though the garment, and though her clothing be of wrought gold, yet her glory lies within. Here lies the glory of a christian, to be glorious within. And how can we have this inward holiness, grace, and goodness, and glory, unless we be versed in this work of meditation?

Thereby also, you shall offer up yourselves unto divine embraces; and upon this ground of meditation will God give out his loves unto you. In Cant. vii. 12, saith Christ: "There will I give thee my loves." There; where? "Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth." Here is the public assembly. What is this to meditation? Yes, in the former verse: "Come my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the villages;"

places of retirement; "There will I give thee my loves," upon the ground of retirement. There will he give forth his loves. Oh, what a great mercy is here, by this work of meditation, you do not only offer up yourselves unto divine embraces; but there, upon meditation ground, will God give out his loves unto you.

Thereby also your souls and hearts shall be subdued unto God: as in sin, so here, friends, it is not a sinful thought that doth subdue my heart into sin; it is not a sinful suggestion that subdues my heart into sin: but, a complacential dwelling of sinful thoughts in my heart, subdues my heart into sin. So it is not a transient good thought that will subdue the soul, or the heart unto God; but it is a complacential dwelling of good thoughts in the heart that doth subdue the heart unto God, and that is done by meditation. Thereby therefore, I say, your very hearts shall be subdued unto the Lord. Oh what a mercy is this.

By this work of meditation on God, and the things of God; you shall live on God. Possibly a man may come to the court where the king is, and not live upon the king, because he does not stay there; but those that stay at the court, they live upon the king, for they stay there. Now by a thought, I do not stay upon God; but by a frequent meditation on God, I shall live in God; for then I stay by God, and I do stay on him.

Thereby also you shall have a constant relief against all your afflictions both inward and outward.

Inward, Psalm cxliii., "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, (for saith he, verse 4.) My spirit is overwhelmed within me, my heart within me is desolate:" what then? "I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works." Here lies the relief against spiritual fears, and overwhelmings of soul, even to meditate on God as one ought to do in a right manner: I am overwhelmed, but I will meditate on all thy works, and muse on the work of thy hands.

As for the outward afflictions, Psalm cxix., the place cited before verse 23. "Princes also did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes." Reproach from an ordinary man, is affliction enough; but for kings and princes to speak against one, this is a great matter. What relief then? "But thy servant did meditate on thy statutes." So that by

this, you have a constant relief against both outward, and inward afflictions. And,

Thereby also you shall be freed from that unkindness, that God will take at your hands if you do not meditate on God and the things of God. Friends, if you do not meditate on God and the things of God, God will take it very unkindly at your hands. What man that is abroad beyond sea, hearing that his wife frolicks it at home and never thinks on him, will not take it unkindly? We are absent now from God, and to frolick and be vain, and go up and down, and have no thoughts on God, no meditation on God; how unkindly must God take this at our hands? It is a slight, if a man speak unto you, and you do not think of what he speaks, it is a slight to him. So to read what God saith, or see what God doth, and not think on it, not to meditate on it; what is this but a slight unto God?

Respect and meditation go together. Psalm cxix. 15, "I will meditate on thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways." So then, the want of meditation and thinking on what God saith and what God doth, is a great slighting of him, it is a want of respect, and God will take it unkindly. And what then? Why he will deal by you as you deal by him: if you think not on him, he will not think on you; and in the day of your extremity, when you call and cry to him, because you thought not of him, he will not think of you. But to end all.

God knows, and your own souls know, how you have lain musing in the way of sin; how sometimes you have lain devising mischief upon your beds; how often you have chewed the devil's cud; what swarms of unclean thoughts, of proud thoughts, of unbelieving thoughts, have possessed your hearts. Oh, friends, shall we lie musing upon our bed in a way of sin, and shall we not think and muse and meditate on God and the things of God? What, shall we not be the same for God, that ever we have been for sin? Oh, we have had our sinful musing times, therefore now why should we not have our holy musings also?

And to conclude all; meditation, holy meditation, is a very great friend to heavenly conversation. Sweet meditation of God, is a very great friend to holy conversation; private meditation, a great friend to an outward holy conversation.

Now then, as ever you desire that the holiness of your conversation may be advanced; that you may be as godly now in your thoughts, as ever you have been ungodly; that God may take nothing unkindly from you; that you may have a constant relief against all afflictions, both inward and outward; that you may live on God; that your hearts may be subdued unto God; that God may give out his loves unto you; that you may be very godly; that you may have a testimony in your own souls that you are truly godly; that you may suck out the sweetness of all the things you know; that you may be let into the secret of godliness, and not stand at the door of knowledge only; that you may never lose a precious hour, but redeem your time: now to the work of meditation; and you that have neglected it so long, be not ashamed to begin it at last.

SERMON IX.

GOD'S RETURN TO THE SOUL OR NATION.

“Return, O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants,” PSALM XC. 13.

THIS psalm is a “psalm of Moses the man of God,” saith the title.

Wherein he doth strengthen his faith, and the Israelites' faith in God; shews the misery and frailty of man's life, and petitions God for his mercy.

He sets down the misery and frailty of man's life, in the body of the psalm. But before, in the beginning of the psalm, he doth strengthen his own and others' faith in God.

A man is never fit to look upon the troubles of this world, and the miseries thereof, until his heart be established in God by believing. This therefore he doth, in the first place, by several arguments of comfort.

First drawn from their interest in God. Verse 1, “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.” As if he should say, We are now in the wilderness, and so no